

session of the forts by force while the commissioners sent by the State convention were at Washington.

The commissioners, having been told by the South Carolina representatives that President Buchanan had agreed that the military situation in Charleston Harbor should not be changed so long as no attack was made on the forts, were not unnaturally, very much excited at the news of Anderson's secret and successful occupation of Fort Sumter. They went at once to the Secretary of War, and Mr. Floyd assured them that Major Anderson had violated the understanding given to the South Carolina representatives by the President. They then, on December 28th, attacked the President,¹ and asserted that the faith of the Government had been forfeited by Anderson's conduct. We have not the President's account of the interview; but we have his denial³ that any agreement between him and the representatives from South Carolina was ever made. The meeting was a stormy and painful one; the commissioners insisted that the President should explain and apologize for Anderson's conduct, and should furthermore order the evacuation of Charleston Harbor by the United States troops.³

On the next day, the 29th, they sent to the President their credentials, accompanying

them with a very violent and peremptory letter, urging the immediate withdrawal of the troops. To this the President replied on the 31st in a long and well argued letter, very moderate in tone, in which he gave his account

¹ Orr to Crawford ; Crawford, p. 148.

² Buchanan, pp. 168, 185.

³ Buchanan, p. 182.